

THE FINEST
RUSSIAN PERFORMERS

A. WITT presents

A HASTAC
PRODUCTION

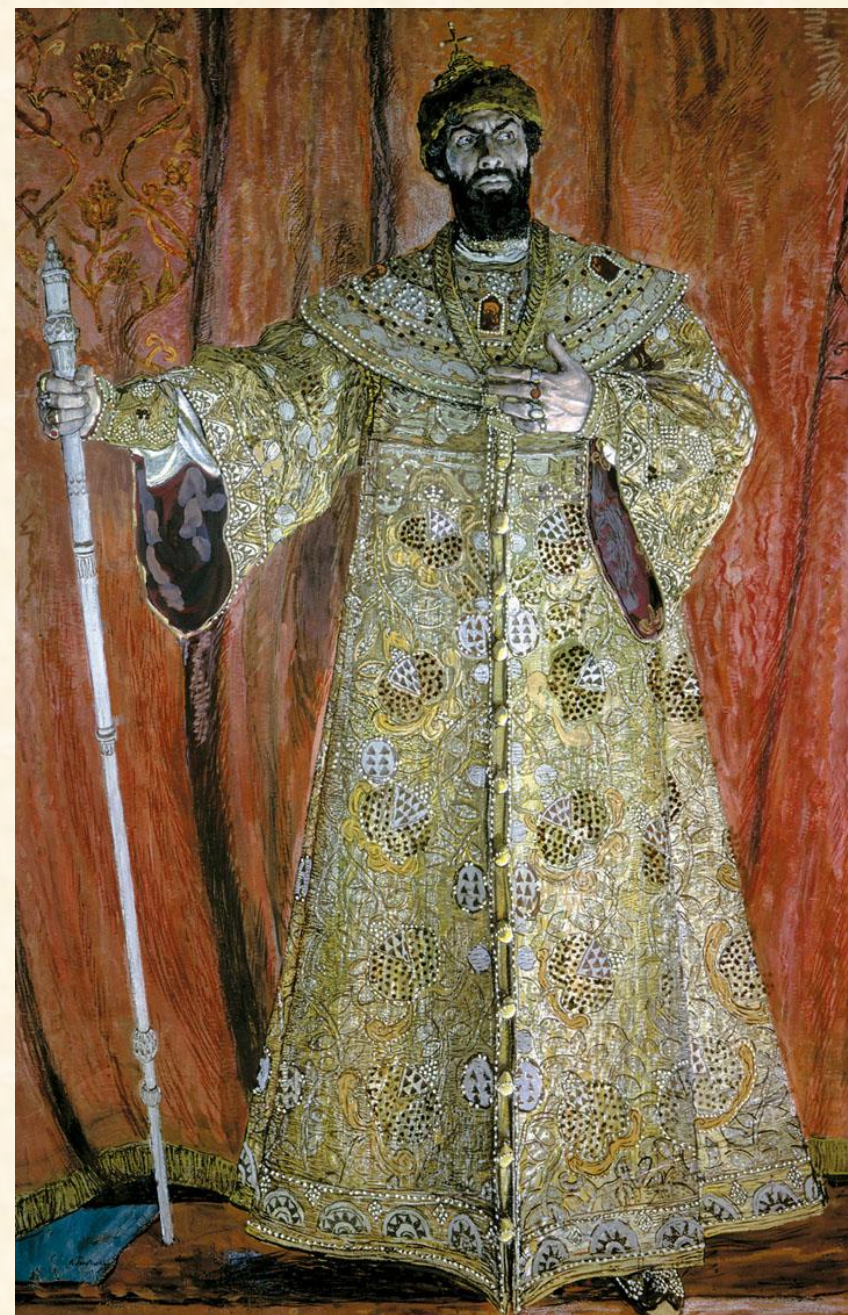
RECENTLY-ARRIVED



Anna Pavlova in *California Poppy*

(defended in December, 2018) and may now be found as an interactive website (<http://networksalarusse.com/network>). Moving forward, I intend to expand the project to include geographic maps of performance activities that will contribute to an online exhibit of these performers and the Americans with whom they interacted. Tracing these relationships demonstrates the interconnectedness of the individuals, the extent to which they were active within the American cultural landscape prior to the Cold War, and the impact they had upon artistic trends of that period.

The network graph began as a visual aid and research tool used to track the large number of individuals and companies interacting with each other; however, using network analysis has proved indispensable in solving important puzzles presented by the source materials, such as the frequent shifting of personnel within the performance companies that toured the United States. This problem was then compounded by general inconsistencies in how newspapers of the time referred to these companies, and similar discrepancies in more recent secondary scholarship. The most obvious example of this issue is the way in which most dance companies touring in the United States from the 1910s through the 1940s were typically referred to (in the press or even in their own publicity) as simply the “Russian Ballet” or the “Ballets Russes.” These names and similar generic variants were often used interchangeably and were applied to a large number of companies: Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes, de Basil’s Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo, the post-1938 reorganized Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Gertrude Hoffman’s company for *La Saison des Ballets Russes* (usually referred to in the press as simply the “Russian Ballet” but sometimes as the “Ballets Russes”), Anna Pavlova and Mikhail Mordkin’s “Russian Ballet,” Pavlova’s independent touring company (often called the “Russian Ballet”), and Mordkin’s 1910s “Imperial Russian Ballet” (which was often shortened to just “Russian Ballet”). The same issue arose in relation to the “Russian Grand Opera Company.” In such situations, I found that the only way to reliably tell which company is being discussed in a given newspaper review is by tracking the personnel. For many of these companies, the most prominent



Feodor Chaliapin in *Boris Godunov*

performers (such as Leonide Massine or Irina Baronova) would often jump between companies within a single season, and the lesser-known performers would need to be tracked as well. Thus began the first version of this network graph, and it has expanded from there to track the many interconnected figures, companies, and other entities that were interacting with each other. As of the most recent version of the graph there are over 450 such entities with nearly 1,200 relationships.

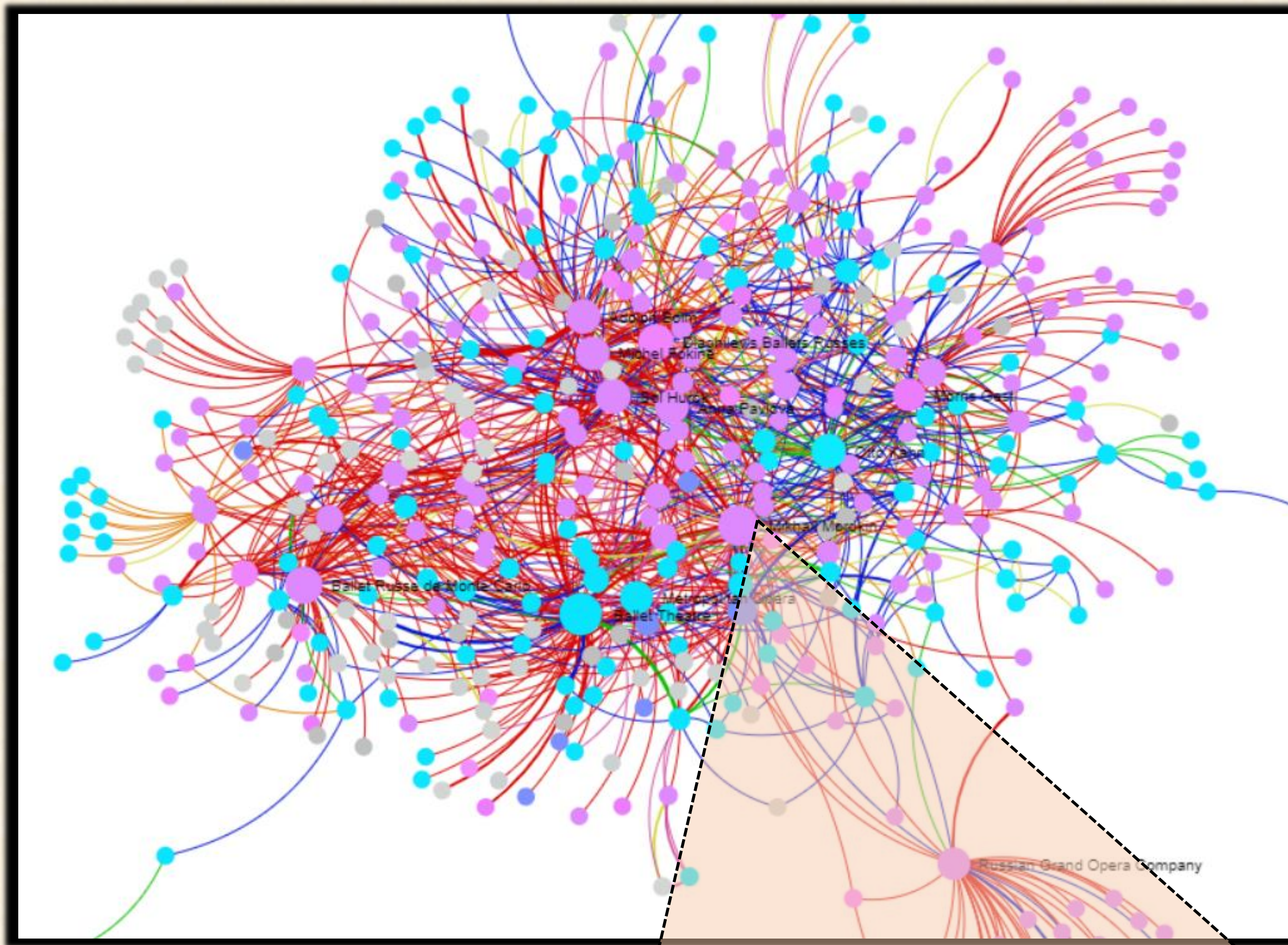
All performer and company images are from the online collections of either the Library of Congress or the New York Public Library.

SYNOPSIS (PROJECT DESCRIPTION)

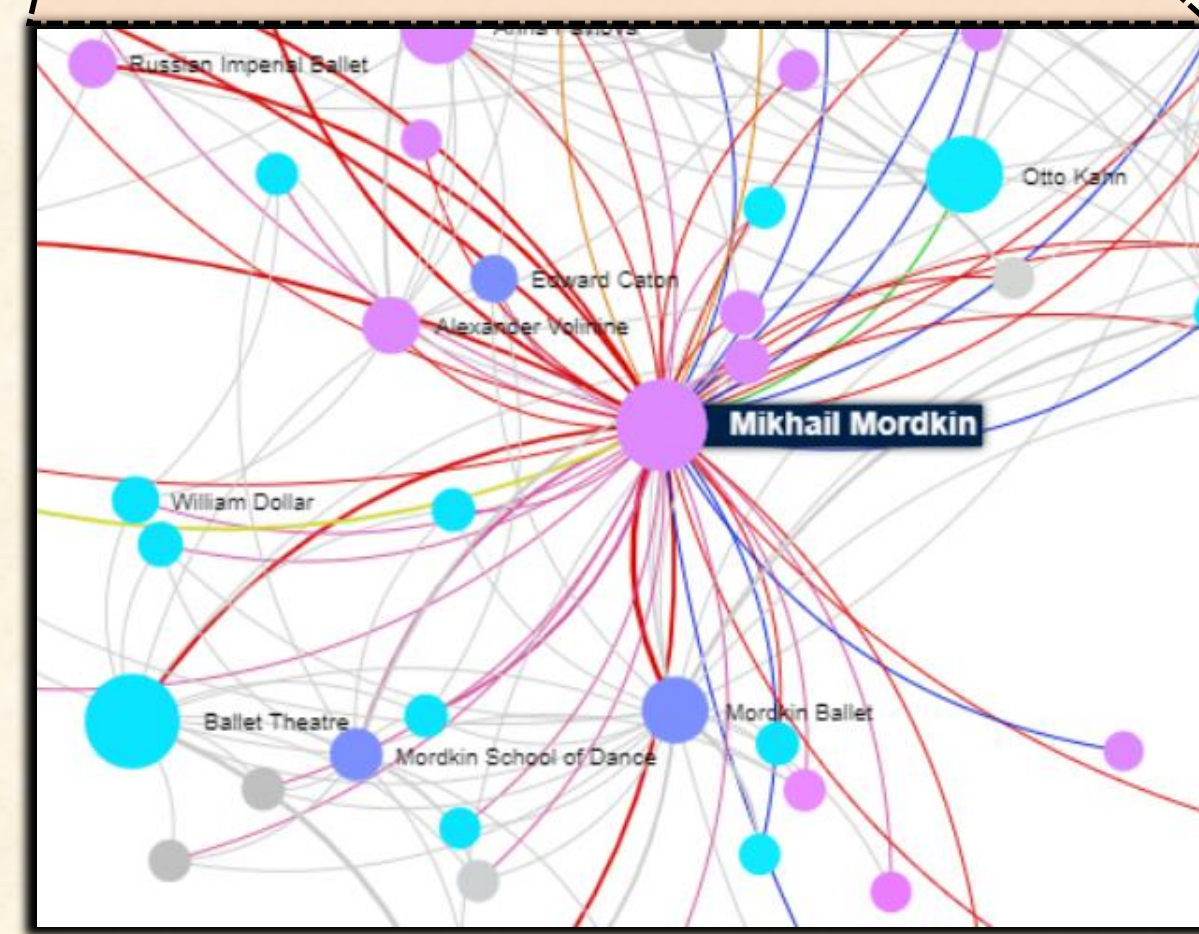
This project is an exploration of Russian-born émigré and traveling performers of ballet, vaudeville, and opera who came to the United States in the first half of the twentieth century with a particular interest in the professional and personal connections these performers had to impresarios, theater managers, patrons, American artists performing in the same fields, and other individuals of note active in the United States at this time. The network graph of these relationships, visualized using Gephi, was a digital component of my PhD dissertation in Musicology



Pavley-Oukrainsky Dance Company



Clicking on individual nodes results in a highlighted “ego network” for that node. This is the ego network for Mikhail Mordkin, one of only three individuals to have all six relationship types in the full network graph.



NODES (CIRCLES) = NATIONALITY

Light purple	Light purple = Russian, Russian Empire*
Blue	Blue = American
Blue-Purple	Blue-Purple = Russian-American**
Gray	Gray = All others

* Includes individuals/groups who were perceived (or depicted) as Russian in American newspapers or other primary documents from the time.

** Includes individuals born to Russian (or Russian Empire) parents in the United States, as well as predominantly Russian-populated performance companies formed (and primarily active) within the United States

EDGES (LINES) = RELATIONSHIP TYPES

Red	Red = Artistic (Mutual collaboration)
Blue	Blue = Professional (includes administrative roles)
Pink	Pink = Educational (Teacher-Student)
Orange	Orange = Personal (Acquaintances, Friendships)
Yellow	Yellow = Family (includes by marriage)
Green	Green = Patron (both financial and social patronage)

REPERTOIRE (MATERIALS USED)

The contents of the graph (the performers themselves as well as the relationships between them) were determined primarily through concert programs, publicity materials, newspaper reviews, and personal items (diaries, memoirs, correspondence). The materials used in all portions of this project were limited by the specific collections consulted at the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library’s Performing Arts Division. These are not the only archival collections to hold relevant materials, however, they are the ones that held the widest variety and largest amount of content that pertained to the research questions of my dissertation and

were therefore the locations visited within the bounds of the dissertation project itself. As the project expands and moves forward, I plan to consult additional archives to obtain more materials, thus increasing the list of known individuals and relationships.



Chauve-Souris vaudeville troupe in *Katinka*

or action. The nodes in my graph are mostly individual people, but they may also be groups of people of various types including performance troupes (such as the various Ballets Russes incarnations, the Chauve-Souris vaudeville, etc.), foundations or business entities, and even government entities. Additionally, nodes in my graph may be technically non-human physical institutions such as performance venues or schools when such an entity participated in network building. There are six relationship types that exist between the node entities: artistic, patron, professional, family, educational, and personal. When two nodes are connected by multiple relationship (edge) types in my graph they appear as weighted edges.

Such is the case most commonly when relationships between two entities change over time, as when a student-teacher relationship changes to one of mutual artistic collaboration. The entities with the largest number of relationships in the graph are often the most influential individuals or companies active at a given time. They are generally the driving forces behind major trends.

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LIMITED ENGAGEMENT



Adolph Bolm in *Prince Igor*

WHO’S WHO (THE GRAPH: TERMINOLOGY AND CONTENTS)

Network graphs consist of nodes (the circles or “dots” on the graph) and edges (the “lines” connecting the dots). In the network graph created for this project, the nodes represent people (or groups) while the edges represent the relationships that exist between the people. In technical terms, my graph is a unimodal undirected multiplex network, which means (in short) that it has one functional node type and multiple edge types in which the relationships (edges) between entities (nodes) are presented without indications of direction, agency,



Leonide Massine in *Union Pacific*